



Year in Review 2018

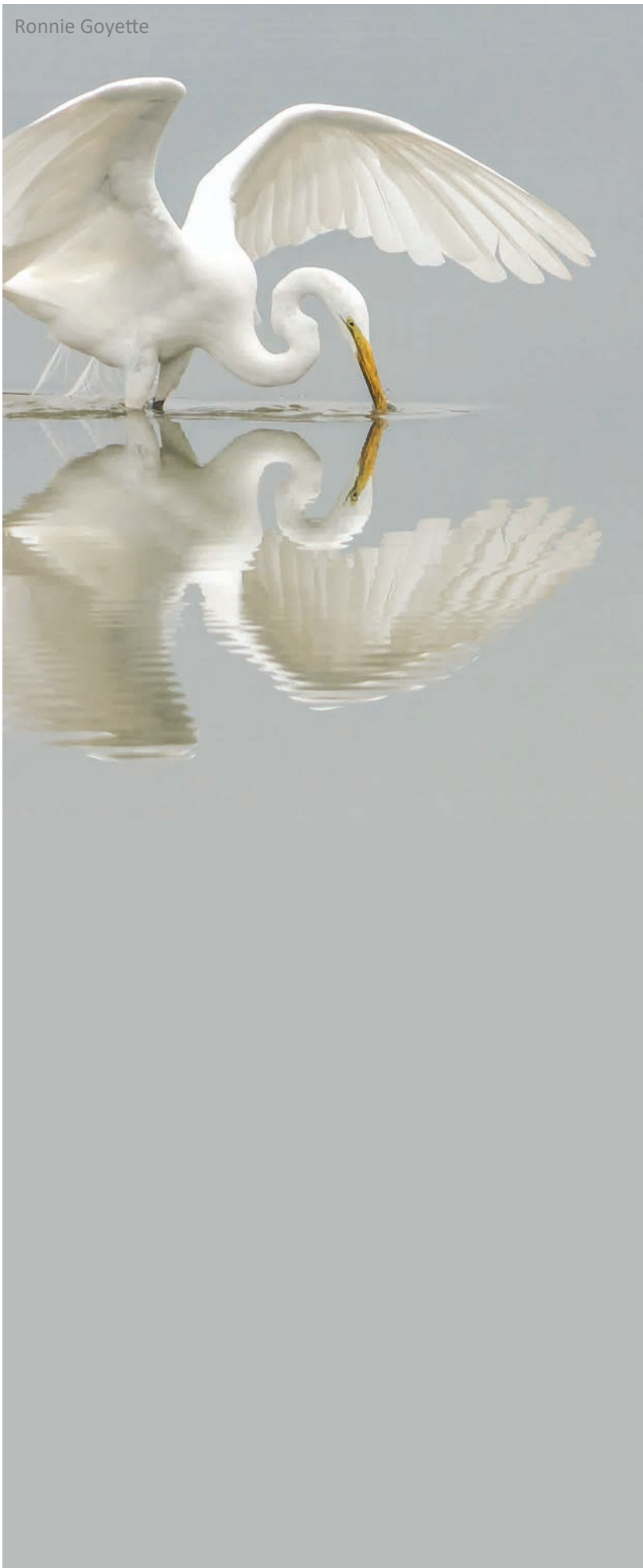
California Coastal Commission



45 years of coastal protection...

The Coastal Commission closed out its 45th year of coastal protection having made significant progress on many of the agency's long-term goals. From advancing sea level rise planning policy, to expanding environmental justice principles throughout the agency, to providing public access in creative new ways, the Commission continues to find new ways to uphold Coastal Act policies and apply its principles in changing and uncertain times.

In addition, the Commission could not achieve its mission without the close collaboration of many state and federal agencies, including but not limited to the State Lands Commission, CalTrans, the State Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Ocean Protection Council, California Natural Resources Agency, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Coastal Protection. Along with our local government partners, these vital relationships buoy the Commission's capacity to address critical coastal resource management challenges. As 2018 comes to a close, it's time once again to take stock of what we've accomplished, what we've learned, and what challenges and opportunities lay ahead in the coming year.



For Auld Lang Syne

The “Silver Wave” keeps on rolling through the ranks of Commission staff, as the agency’s long-serving career professionals transition into well-deserved retirement. In 2018, the Commission bid a bittersweet farewell to a number of long-serving, devoted staff members. Their dedication to public service will continue to inspire their peers for many years. We thank them for their collective contribution to California’s iconic coastline.

Chris Pederson - Chief Counsel

Legal Division, San Francisco Office, August 2000—December 2018

Nancy Cave - District Manager

North Central Coast District, San Francisco Office, December 1977—December 2017

Al Padilla - District Supervisor

South Coast District, Long Beach Office, December 1986—July 2018

Teresa Henry - District Manager

South Coast District, Long Beach Office, June 1984—September 2018

Melanie Hale-Faust - Coastal Program Analyst III

Statewide Planning Unit, Arcata Office, July 1983—April 2018

Winneka Bradley - Staff Services Analyst

South Coast District, Long Beach Office, April 1985—December 2017

Virginia de la Cruz - Management Services Technician

Human Resources, San Francisco Office, April 1999—December 2017



Governor *Jerry Brown*

2018 closed the chapter on the longest-serving Governor in the state's history. Not only did Governor Jerry Brown serve an unprecedented 4 terms as Governor (1974-1982; 2010-2018), he played an outsized role in California's coastal program. As Secretary of State, he signed the controversial ballot initiative that would become Proposition 20, passed by the voters in 1972. Four years later, he would sign the Coastal Act itself, after personally wading into the late night negotiations at the end of the 1976 legislative session. Upon his return, he made climate change his signature issue, and presided over the successful effort to make California's Cap and Trade program permanent. This program is primarily aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but has also become an important source of funding for the Commission's sea level rise work. The fabric of this agency will forever reflect the warp and weft of Governor Brown's hand.

“...longest-serving Governor in the state's history.”

Expanding Public Access, Step by Step

Thanks to the Commission's enduring commitment to public access, getting to the beach gets easier every year. Between the opening of several new trail segments, a comprehensive statewide mapping effort, and an innovative, interactive mobile phone app, 2018 ushered in more ways for more people to find more opportunities to experience California's 1,270 miles of mainland coast line.



Alison Taggart-Barone,
Golden Gate National
Parks Conservancy

Nearly 10 miles of new trail segments opened for public use in Northern California, completing linkages that provide enhanced access to dozens more. In Humboldt County, the City of Eureka completed a 3.7-mile long segment of California Coastal Trail (CCT) along Humboldt Bay, from Truesdale Avenue to Tydd Street, pursuant to a permit approved by the Commission in 2016 ([City of Eureka 1-15-2054](#)). This new segment connects to the existing multi-use trail system along the waterfront and inner shoreline, forming a 6.3-mile continuous, bayfront trail. The Humboldt Bay Trail system is a coordinated project among the cities of Eureka and Arcata as well as Humboldt County.



Humboldt Bay Trail



Noyo Headlands Trail, Fort Bragg

In Mendocino County, the City of Ft. Bragg completed the Noyo Headlands coastal trail by connecting the north and south segments to create a continuous 3.5 mile long trail on the former Georgia Pacific property. The historic lumber mill occupied this large coastal headland between Highway One and the shoreline for over 100 years, preventing both physical and visual public access to this large segment of the Fort Bragg coastline. Reuse of this former industrial property as a public park has filled a long-standing gap in the trail, and completed a significant segment of CCT that connects too many miles of trail further north. In September, the Commission approved an amendment to the Ft. Bragg LCP that will guide future uses of the Mill site, and provide additional access and mixed commercial, residential and recreational opportunities.

Also in Mendocino, the nonprofit organization Mendocino Land Trust opened another spectacular access trail, this time along the scenic Point Arena coast. The Pelican Bluffs project includes a small parking lot off of Highway One and a 2.2 mile long bluff top trail. The parking lot area was purchased with a Coastal Conservancy grant and the bluff top trail was required by two permits issued by the Commission over 30 years ago. The property owners not only appealed Mendocino County's approval of the project ([A-1-MEN-16-0040](#)), but also filed a lawsuit to prevent the project from being constructed. The Mendocino Land Trust (along with the Attorney General's office) did an excellent job of defending the right of public access and eventually settled the lawsuit. On May 19 the Pelican Bluffs Trail was opened for public use.



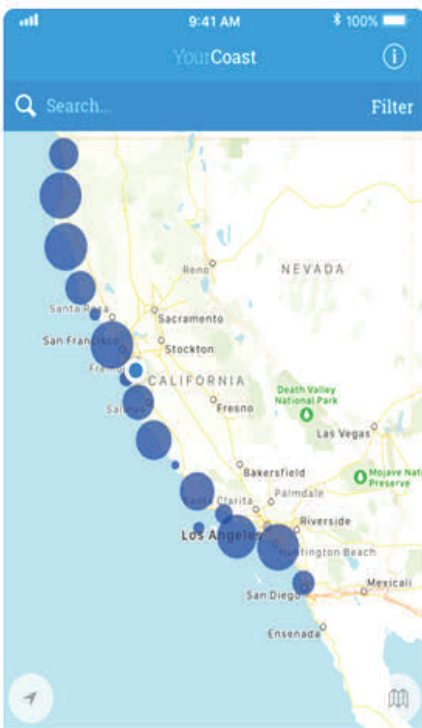
Pelican Bluff Preserve, Mendocino County

In May, the Commission approved an extensive Public Access Management Plan for Sharp Park, submitted by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. This plan was required as part of an earlier authorized of a significant earthen berm and protective works for the historic golf course. The plan requires the installation of significant access amenities throughout the park and the berm, which provides an integral connection with the California Coastal Trail.

In July, the County of Santa Cruz completed a short but extremely popular segment of CCT in the community of Live Oak by removing a decades-long private encroachment located within the East Cliff Drive right of way and relocated the road inland to allow space for a new public seaside promenade with a ramp and a stairway to reach Twin Lakes State Beach. The improvements include pedestrian paths, bike lanes and racks, formal parking and crosswalk. A critical component of the CCT, this connects to several miles of multi-use trails operated by the Santa Cruz Port District and the City of Santa Cruz.



New public promenade in Live Oak, Santa Cruz County.



Thanks to a creative enforcement settlement, the Commission launched the [YourCoast App](#) in December, a free mobile application that allows beach goers to use their smart phones find local beaches or plan for road trip destinations. Built on the information contained in the popular [California Coastal Access guidebooks](#), the app allows users to find directions to over 1,500 coastal access sites, as well as details about coastal amenities, fees, hours of operation, handicap accessibility, and more. It also allows subscribers to submit photos and updated information, such as trail conditions and other changed circumstances. The Commission worked with acclaimed tech pioneer Sean Parker's engineers to develop and launch the app as part of a settlement agreement for a previous Coastal Act violation in Big Sur. It received widespread media coverage just in time for the Holiday travel season, and was downloaded over 12,800 times in the first two months.

“...over 1,500 coastal access sites.”

Access comes in many forms, and isn't always recreational or glamorous. Sometimes it's just a matter of getting through the day. Homeless populations are chronically underserved in terms of access to basic amenities many take for granted. So it was gratifying for the Commission to approve the installation of portable toilets and showers in Venice Beach's Rose Avenue Parking lot in the Commission's original jurisdiction. Although not the typical access normally envisioned for a parking lot in the coastal zone, the Commission had no trouble making the Coastal Act findings to approve this pilot program started by non-profit groups to address the hepatitis outbreak linked to the lack of adequate sanitation.



Punching Through the Glassy Ceiling at Mavericks

As any surfer, kayaker or long-distance swimmer would attest, the need to enhance coastal access doesn't stop at the ocean's edge. In 2018, the Commission considered the World Surf League (WSL) application to host their invitation-only, big wave surf competition at Maverick's Beach near Half Moon Bay. Because this event allows exclusive, private use of state waters for the duration of the event, the Commission's previous permit for the 2017 contest was approved on the condition that the company open its all-male competition to women, and submit a more robust plan for gender inclusion in any future permit applications. The Commission's condition was designed to maximize equal access to state waters and assure a "women's competition that is as similar to the men's as possible, including in terms of competitor numbers, heat structure, and prizes."

For the 2018 permit determination, after consultation with North Central Coast District staff, WSL revised the initial permit application submittal to include separate divisions for men and women, with multiple heats and equitable prize money for male and female competitors (equal prizes for men and women based on ranking). On [October 12, 2018](#), the Commission approved the project with equal prize money for men and women, with conditions pursuant to staff's recommendation.

Upon revising the prize structure for Maverick's, WSL announced that it will award "equal prize money to male and female athletes for every WSL-controlled event on their Big Wave Tour" from here forward, assuring equal access for all, regardless of gender, consistent with Coastal Act directives and public trust principles.



Sea Level Rise: “The New Abnormal”

Nothing poses a greater threat to California’s coastline than sea level rise, and how California chooses to adapt to what former Governor Jerry Brown has called “the new abnormal.” Decisions we make today will directly shape the future of California’s coastal identity for generations. Nearly 400,000 people live within 6 feet of sea level. California’s \$40 billion dollar ocean economy is fueled by our internationally recognized beaches, bustling ports and over 2,000 miles of transportation infrastructure; all of which is at risk if the state doesn’t plan wisely and adapt strategically.

In July, the Commission adopted a resolution, [“Committing to Maintaining and Enhancing California’s Beaches and Other Coastal Habitats in the Face of Sea Level Rise.”](#) This was in response to a request from the Ocean Protection Council to all coastal management agencies to develop commitments to improving coastal climate resilience and emission reduction. The Commission’s resolution, along with commitments from OPC and other state and local agencies, were presented during the Governor’s Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco in August, to underscore the urgent need for climate action.

The Administration also invited the Commission to participate on a technical review team to evaluate scientific papers and products for [California’s 4th Climate Assessment](#) as part of the preparation for the Governor’s Climate Summit in September. This cutting edge research initiative was launched by the Brown Administration to provide rigorous, comprehensive climate scenarios to inform State and local resiliency measures. The Commission’s Coastal Engineer, Dr. Lesley Ewing, and Environmental Scientist Dr. Mary Matella represented the agency on this important and ambitious project.

Because local governments are on the front lines when it comes to sea level planning and response, it has never been more important to support this critical partnership between the state and coastal cities and counties.

In order to ensure that local governments have access to the best available science and planning advice when preparing for projected sea level rise impacts, the Commission updated the [Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance](#) for local governments, originally adopted in 2015. This is the policy document which sets forth broad principles related to future sea level rise modeling and adaptation planning approaches. In November of 2018, the Guidance was amended to align with recent changes to the [Natural Resources Agency’s Safeguarding California Plan](#), which reflect the rapidly evolving understanding of this complex phenomenon.

“But the crisis on our coast is already here, and local governments and the Commission aren’t waiting to address it.”

An essential companion to the [Sea Level Rise Guidance](#) is the [Commission’s Draft Residential Adaptation Planning Guidance](#), which provides more detail on specific adaptation strategies and model ordinance language that cities and counties can modify for different community and geologic contexts. Throughout 2018, the Commission held several public hearings on its [Draft Adaptation Guidance](#), received public comment, and incorporated many suggestions into a revised draft. The agency is continuing with public outreach and education efforts to clarify the document’s purpose as well as the need for adaptation planning. The Commission expects to adopt a final document in 2019.

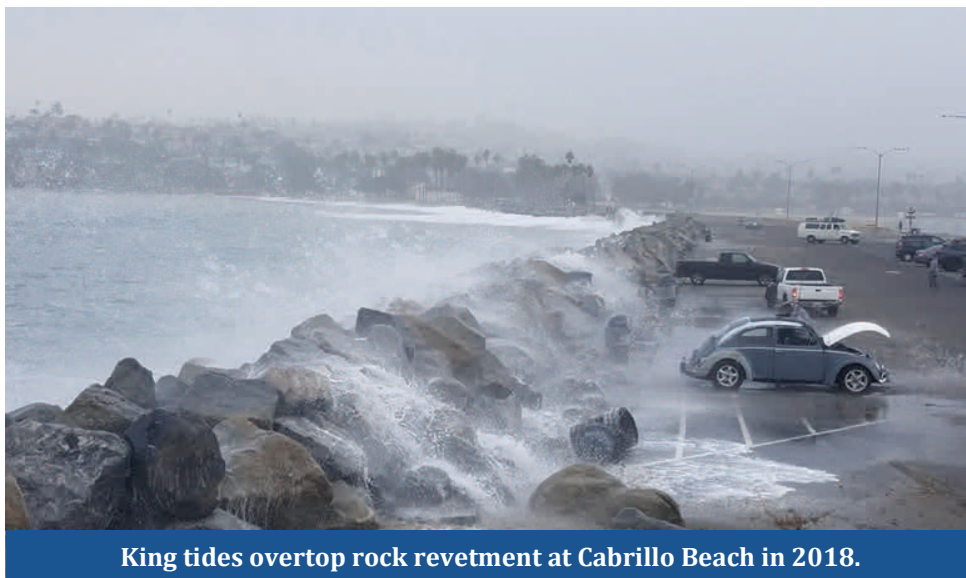
But the crisis on our coast is already here, and local governments and the Commission aren’t waiting to address it. The City/County of San Francisco is one of the early adopters of progressive sea level rise adaptation strategies, through their development of the Ocean Beach Master Plan and the [Western Shoreline Plan](#) approved by the Commission in May. The product of many years of stakeholder process and public visioning, this comprehensive LCP amendment addresses coastal erosion, flooding, critical infrastructure and public access through a set of actionable policies.

Guided by the new LCP policies, the City will now implement proactive adaptation measures south of Sloat Boulevard, including managed retreat and beach nourishment. The City will also be developing future adaptation measures along the entire shoreline based upon best available science. The amendment includes several requirements to site new development out of harm's way, while ensuring that armoring is avoided wherever feasible and that it be accompanied by appropriate mitigation when required to protect existing structures in danger from erosion.

Coastal Commission staff was able to recommend approval of the LCP amendment as submitted due to the extensive upfront coordination and collaboration with the City during the local planning phases of this project. Certification of this amendment satisfies requirements of grants awarded to the City by the Coastal Commission and State Ocean Protection Council, and implements recommendations from the Commission's 2015 Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance.

In November, the Commission approved the remodel and expansion of an existing vacant restaurant in Encinitas (CDP [6-18-0201](#)). The project is located in the popular "Restaurant Row," an important, beach-front, visitor-serving area with scenic views of the ocean and San Elijo Lagoon. Because the project is located in an area of projected sea level rise, which will affect not only the structure but an existing public access path along the top of an existing revetment, the Commission required some important changes through permit conditions, including; any future shoreline armoring will require an additional permit, accommodation of the inward relocation of the footpath, annual monitoring reports to the Commission regarding the status of the footpath, and a deed restriction to ensure that future purchasers are aware of these commitments. This is an important example of how new development can still be accommodated in a manner that acknowledges the future risks of sea level rise.

To help educate the public and raise public awareness about issue, the Coastal Commission took the lead on organizing the [2018 California King Tides Project](#), which helps people visualize how sea level rise will impact their lives in the future by inviting them to take and share photos of the highest high tides of the year. [The King Tides webpages](#) were moved to the Commission's website, Public Education and Mapping Unit staff developed an online photo upload process and interactive online map-based platform for photo display, and Public Education staff managed the California King Tides social media presence and recruited local organizations to hold public events during King Tides. Thirty-two events took place during the two King Tides of the season on December 22 and 23, 2018 and January 20 and 21, 2019 from Humboldt County to San Diego, and participants uploaded 652 photos of their local king tide events.



Environmental Justice & Tribal Consultation

After coordinating with approximately 200 Native American Tribes over the course of a year, the Commission adopted its first formal Tribal Consultation Policy in August. The policy is meant to strengthen mutual understandings, build relationships, and enhance communication between tribal representatives and the Commission, and ensure that new development is sensitive to and respectful of important cultural resources. The policy is now in effect, and the consultation process is being implemented.



Mathew Sequoyah

The Commission also made significant progress toward the development of its first [Environmental Justice Policy](#). In 2017, the Commission gained the authority to consider environmental justice in its permitting decisions, thanks to the passage of [AB 2616](#) (Burke). The bill also required the Governor to appoint a Commissioner who lives in and works with underserved communities. Commissioner Effie Turnbull-Sanders is the first commissioner to be appointed to the new designation, and has been serving as the environmental justice appointee for the last two years.

To inform the implementation of this new authority, the Commission immediately embarked on an effort to create an Environmental Justice Policy, based on direct input from and consultation with affected communities and stakeholders. Staff formed an [Environmental Justice Team](#) made up of staff members from every district office and department to conduct personal outreach efforts to local and regional stakeholders, soliciting input on how to develop a draft EJ policy, and what it should include.

In August of 2018, the Commission released an initial draft of the Environmental Justice Policy for a 90-day public comment period. During that time, the Commission held three public hearings, culminating at the November meeting in San Francisco. Extensive written and verbal input from the public and Commissioners has been synthesized into a revised public review draft which is currently being circulated. Pending further revisions, the Environmental Policy will be considered for possible adoption at the March, 2019 hearing in Los Angeles.

Several members of the Environmental Justice Team also completed a year-long training on race and equity principles, as part of a group of approximately 20 staff members. The [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#) (GARE) conducted a 12-month training for state agencies in Sacramento, including the State Lands Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Public Health, Strategic Growth Council and several others. Bimonthly, day-long, interactive classes focused on making measurable steps to advance equity within state agencies through the preparation of Racial Equity Action Plans (REAPs). Commission staff also put the GARE training concepts directly to work in the district offices, reaching out to grassroots organizations and disadvantaged communities to guide the drafting of the Environmental Justice Policy.

For the “graduation ceremony” in December, all agencies were asked to prepare a creative presentation reflecting on the experience. The Commission staff produced a short video, which can be viewed [here](#).



*Commissioner
Effie Turnbull-Sanders*





Alexy Bever

Enforcement Highlights

Coastal Act enforcement is an essential component of coastal protection, because any law is only as strong its record of compliance. The Commission's Enforcement Unit is dedicated to turning unfortunate circumstances into positive outcomes, through voluntary compliance, negotiated consent orders, restoration orders and contested unilateral orders. Because litigation is costly and time consuming, the Commission makes every attempt to resolve violations amicably.

One of the Enforcement Unit's biggest highlights comes not from a specific case, but from the hiring of a new District Enforcement officer in our South Central District office, the office with the highest number of open violation cases--645. That position had been vacant for almost a year, during which time there was no enforcement presence in Santa Barbara and Ventura County, and the Malibu and Santa Monica Mountains portion of Los Angeles County. The newly hired staff person is already making a huge difference in case resolution and tackling very high-profile cases with very significant resource impacts.

In 2014, the agency gained the authority to impose administrative penalties for Coastal Act violations involving public access. This new authority has proven so effective that merely the threat of fines motivates property owners to work cooperatively with the Commission to come to a mutually agreeable solution, reducing the average rate of resolution for access cases by over 90%.

Oceanaire Condominium Complex: Pacifica Beach, San Mateo County

At its April 2018 hearing, the Commission approved a settlement of a major public access case in Pacifica through the issuance of consent and restoration orders. The violation involved unpermitted development as well as failure to comply with a 2012 coastal development permit. The permit required a public access trail and stairway down a steep coastal bluff to a wide sandy beach, as well as additional public bluff trails and viewing areas. The stairway provided one of the few points of constructed beach public access in a dense urban region and semi-urban neighborhood, and the only true public access point to this long, sandy beach.



Unpermitted grading and boulder placement on Pacifica Beach.

The Commission's original permit required the property owners to promptly repair any damage that would close public access in order to maintain the public stairway and preserve its structural integrity. Despite this, the property owners failed to properly construct or maintain the stairway as required, leading to its collapse. Rather than making the necessary repairs when contacted by the Commission, property owners proceeded to dump large boulders on the beach across the length of the property, excavate large trenches and grade the beach and bluff, without permits from the Commission or the city. The construction vehicles, equipment and activity closed the bluff trail, viewing area and much of the beach. All of these actions had substantial negative impacts to public, as well as to coastal habitat resources.



Fully restored public access to Pacifica beach

The Commission's action ordered the property owners to clear the site, reopen the public access way and trails, restore the site with native coastal bluff habitat, restore the impacted beach areas, and monitor the site restoration for a period of five years from a successful implementation. The Consent Orders also imposed a penalty of \$1,450,000 to settle the administrative and civil liabilities for the Coastal Act violations. The penalty has already been collected and deposited into the Violation Remediation Account, and the trails are now open once again.

11 Lagunita – Laguna Beach, Orange County

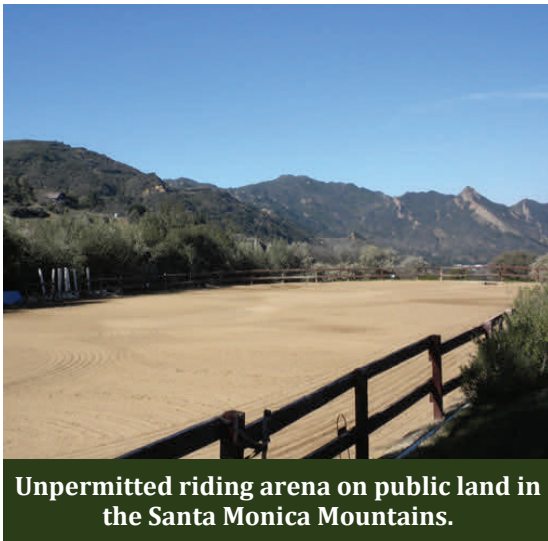
On August 9, 2018, the Commission voted unanimously to fine the owners of an oceanfront property in Laguna Beach in the amount of \$1 million, and ordered the removal of an 11-foot-tall, 80-foot-long seawall, which is impacting the public beach and impairing public access. The seawall was rebuilt and expanded to protect a 62-year-old house, in direct conflict with earlier permit conditions saying the seawall must be removed if the house were remodeled.

Seawalls cause long-term harm to beaches by interfering with natural sand supply while increasing erosion rates on adjacent lands. In an era of sea level rise and climate change, sandy beaches are becoming increasingly valuable as lower cost recreational resources and a source of relief from summer heat waves. For these reasons, this seawall had only been permitted to protect an older, pre-Coastal Act home in a hazardous location on the condition that any new house be built far enough inland so as to avoid the need for a future seawall. However, the property owner demolished the house down to the studs without a permit, and replaced it with an entirely new, re-engineered structure, boosting the home's value by \$11 million and greatly extending its useful life. Since the administrative penalty and cease and desist order was issued, the property owner has sued the Commission, and the Commission is currently in litigation.



Unpermitted seawall to protect unauthorized construction of a new house.

Knipe: Santa Monica Mountains, Los Angeles County



Unpermitted riding arena on public land in the Santa Monica Mountains.

On September 13, 2018, the Commission unanimously approved a consent cease and desist and restoration order to address an unpermitted riding arena on public property owned by The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), as well as unpermitted private riding trails, a tractor shed, tack shed, and other structures. The violations included clearance of more than two acres of environmentally sensitive habitat area. The agreement requires the property owners to remove the unpermitted development and restore areas impacted by the activities. They have also agreed to remove 62 fire-prone, invasive pepper trees along with a dozen other invasive trees and replace them with appropriate native trees. In addition, the property owners agreed to transfer more than 22 acres of land to the MRCA near the Backbone Trail trailhead, in the mountains above Malibu, for environmental protection and open space. The land is

adjacent to wildlands that offer near pristine, un-fragmented areas of native habitat supporting native wildlife such as mountain lions, bobcats, gray foxes, coyotes, raptors, owls and turtles. The land transfer was approved in lieu of a \$1 million fine.

Rosalena Community, Carlsbad, San Diego County

In October the Commission resolved a longstanding violation related to the failure to construct a public access trail at a residential community in Carlsbad known as the Rosalena community, which is situated on a bluff on the north side of Batiquitos Lagoon. Construction of the trail was a requirement of a coastal development permit issued in 1985. That permit authorized the subdivision and construction of the Rosalena community, contingent upon a variety of conditions, including that the construction of a .25 mile-long public access trail along the lagoon or the blufftop above the lagoon.

The original developer built the residential component of the project, but not the trail. In February 2015, Commission Enforcement staff notified the homeowners association that the long-standing failure to construct the trail constituted a violation of public access provisions of the Coastal Act, and that the parties were potentially liable for monetary penalties. Since February 2015, the association worked diligently with Commission staff to address these long-standing violations, and has agreed to construct the trail as required.



The Rosalena Trail will tie into an extensive trail network.



View of Batiquitos Lagoon from future trail to be built per enforcement order.

When completed, the trail will provide expansive views of the lagoon, the coast and ocean, and mountains, and potentially link the California Coastal Trail and other coastal trails to an extensive network of inland trails. In addition to building the trail as originally envisioned, a key provision of the Consent Agreement is the additional requirement for the association to secure an easement for a trail connector that, with other proposed trails, will close a critical gap between coastal and inland trails.

The association has agreed to pay \$540,000 to a local non-profit organization to fund acquisition of additional coastal property and/or an additional easement(s) for open space and public access purposes, school programs, and other coastal related programs. Further, as part of the negotiated penalties, the association has agreed to provide a suite of public access improvements, such as trail signs, interpretive signs along the trail; public binoculars at a vista point along the trail; and parking spaces within the Rosalena community strictly for trail users. If the association is unable to provide the easement for the trail connector described above, the association will pay an additional \$540,000 to the Violation Remediation Account of the State Coastal Conservancy.

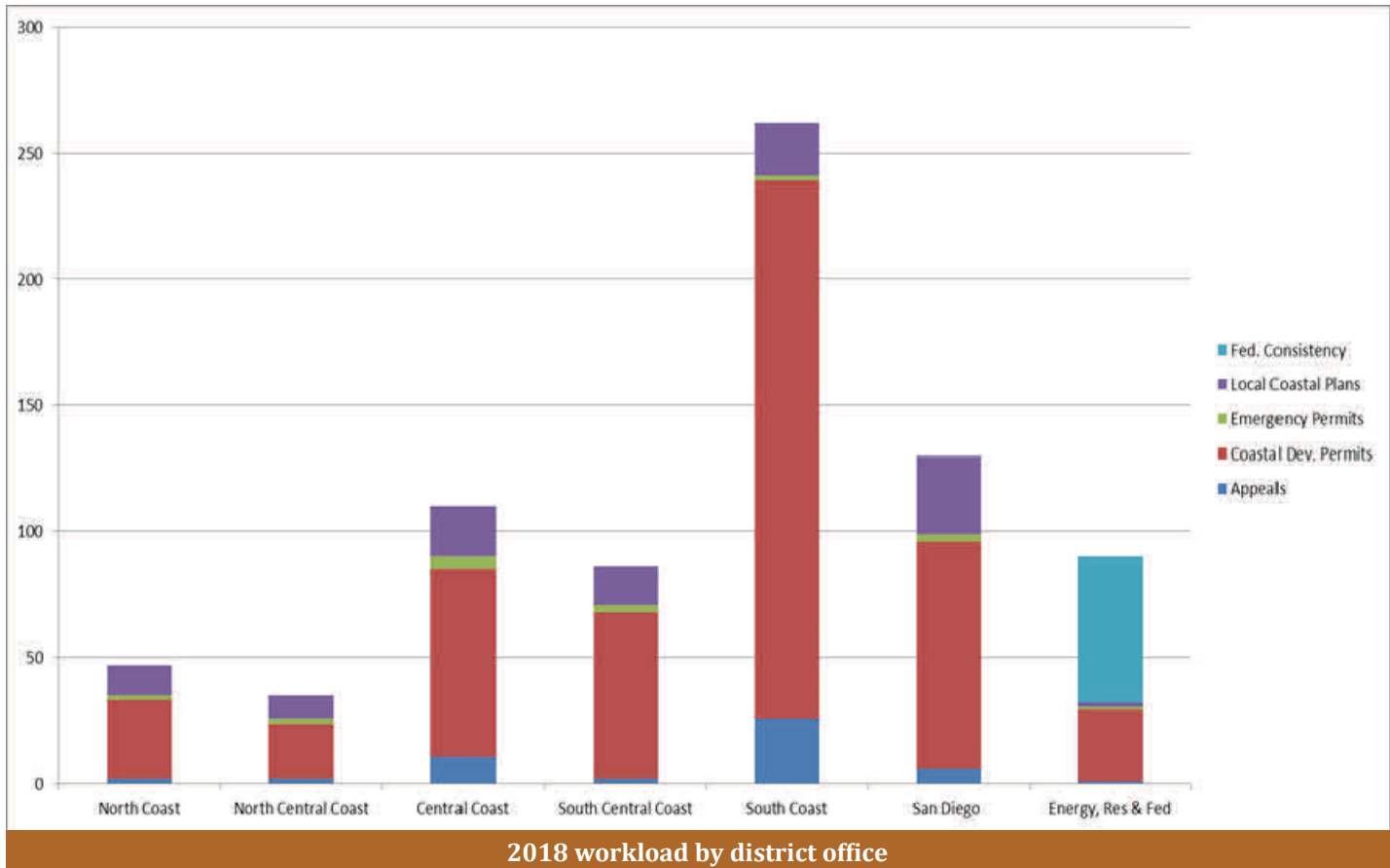


Phil Garner

Coastal Protection by the Numbers

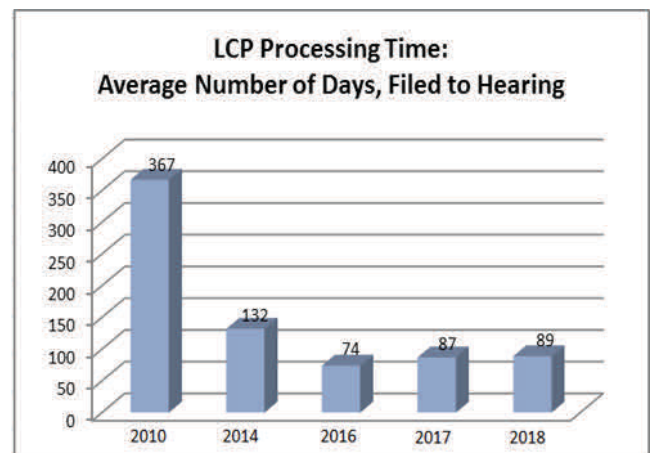
The Commission's Coastal Data Management System (CDMS), continues to prove effective in tracking agency workload data across the year, comparing with past years and identifying trends and anomalies.

In 2018, the Commission's six District offices received and processed 760 permit applications, appeals, emergency permits and LCP amendments, including 58 Federal Consistency items and 32 energy-related items. As is consistently the case, the South Coast office in Long Beach continues to have the highest regulatory workload (241), while the San Diego office processed the most planning items (31).



Of the 525 permits the Commission acted on in 2018, 516 were approved, four (1%) were denied, and the remaining five were withdrawn. The Commission also considered 50 appeals of local government decisions, and found that 18 of them raised a substantial issue under the certified LCP (26 were found to raise no substantial issue). Of these, one project on appeal was denied, and five were approved with conditions.

The Commission received 79 planning-related submittals (amendments, certifications and other submittals related to LCPs, Port Master Plans, Long Range Development Plans and Public Works Plans), 77% of which were filed as complete. The average time from submittal to hearing was 89 days, a negligible increase of 2 days over the 2017 average, and still substantially below the 367-day average in 2010. The Commission acted on 58 Federal Consistency matters, and issued 18 emergency permits and 495 exemptions.



Advances in Local Coastal Planning

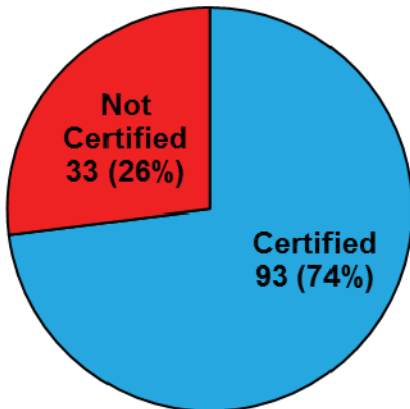
Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) are the local blueprints for Coastal Act policies, implementing statewide planning policy in a locally specific context. The Coastal Commission works closely with all 76 local governments in the coastal zone to manage the planning and development across 126 planning segments. Sixty-two (62) counties and cities are now issuing permits under a Commission-approved, certified LCP.



Michael Perry

However, 14 communities have yet to finish an LCP and assume coastal permitting authority. Unfinished and out-of-date LCPs lead to conflict and delays in development approvals, and ultimately, less effective resource protection and less resilient communities. In addition, many LCPs are significantly out-of-date, and lack critical policies to address sea level rise.

LCP Certification Status of 126 Segments



Remaining Local Governments not yet issuing coastal permits: Cities of Fortuna, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Goleta, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Hermosa Beach, Torrance, Seal Beach, Costa Mesa, Aliso Viejo, San Clemente, Solana Beach, and San Diego County.

One of the Commission's highest priorities over the past five years has been to update and certify these plans. The agency has awarded 49 local planning grants through five rounds of LCP grant funding to 37 jurisdictions, totaling \$5,750,000 dollars. Grant guidelines include a requirement for jurisdictions to assess sea level rise vulnerability and develop climate change adaptation policies and ordinances. The program has been well received by our local government partners, as evidenced by the high demand for grant funds totaling just under \$14 million. But the associated workload for Commission staff has been a significant challenge.

In November of 2018, the Commission awarded a fifth grant round totaling \$750,000 to five local governments to update their LCPs incorporating sea level rise planning and climate change adaptation. This was the last in a series of grant rounds that began in 2014, but the first as part of funding appropriated by the Legislature from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). A total of \$1.5 million was appropriated to the Commission, with half of the funding allocated for staffing support and technical assistance related to climate change and sea level rise issues. The sixth grant round is scheduled to be announced in Spring of 2019.

The state's previous investments in the Commission's LCP grant program continued to pay off in 2018. In February, the Commission certified a comprehensive update to the [City of San Clemente's Land Use Plan](#), which was updated with a \$135,000 LCP grant.

In February the Commission approved the City of San Clemente's comprehensive update to their certified Land Use Plan, which was an important step in that community's effort to obtain a fully certified local coastal program. The update, funded in part by a series of LCP grants, included new and revised policies to address the effects of climate change on the City's beaches and bluffs, including responses to intensifying coastal hazards, as well as other key updates.

In May, the Commission approved the City and County of San Francisco's LCP amendment to reflect the significant sea level rise adaptation work done through its Ocean Beach Master Plan, as well as more general LCP policies to address climate change. The City and County's work was undertaken with the support of a \$13,000 LCP grant awarded by the Commission in FY 14/15, as well as \$160,750 from the Ocean Protection Council, which was administered by the Commission as part of the FY 14/15 LCP grant. Other major planning actions approved by the Commission include [County of San Diego's Land Use Plan](#) in December with use of a \$52,000 LCP grant, while the City of Santa Monica completed and locally-adopted its new Land Use Plan, which was submitted to the Commission in late 2018.

“One of the most important plan approvals in years, the Gaviota Plan will enhance public access...”

In October, Santa Barbara County adopted a comprehensive update to the [Gaviota Plan LCP](#) with modifications suggested by Commission in August, including a clarification to the Hollister Ranch “in-lieu fee” provision. One of the most important plan approvals in years, the Gaviota Plan will enhance public access, protect highly sensitive coastal habitat resources, and avoid coastal hazards associated with sea level rise.



Gaviota Coastline.

The Commission also worked closely with the City and County of Santa Barbara to expedite emergency permits for Highway 101 debris clearance associated by the January debris flow, and an LCP amendment related to disaster response. The expedited LCP amendment approval clears the way for the County to allow property owners to replace homes damaged by natural disaster on a “like for like” basis, with minimal local review. Staff has also been working closely with the City of Malibu and Los Angeles County to expedite placement of temporary housing and streamlined permit procedures for reconstruction after the region’s devastating 2018 wildfires.

In August, the residents of Redondo Beach turned out for a spirited 5-hour hearing, testifying late into the night before the Commission finally approved a Major Amendment to the city’s Land Use Plan as submitted, implementing the local ballot measure known as [Measure C](#). Although locally controversial, this now brings closure to the question of how the City will pursue its waterfront development plan in the King Harbor Pier area, in a manner that won’t clash with the small-scale, eclectic feel of the area.

In December, the Commission approved an [amendment](#) to the County of Santa Barbara’s LCP, enabling the County to relieve congestion on Highway 101 by adding carpool lanes, as well as adding bicycle lanes, restrooms, ADA and pedestrian access and various other public access improvements to enhance the California Coastal Trail in and around Carpinteria. The Commission approved the amendment with minor modifications to minimize impacts to sensitive resources. Not to be outdone, the city of Goleta also applied for, and the Commission approved, a permit to construct numerous road improvements including Class II bike lanes, sidewalks, drainage improvements, public access and habitat restoration throughout the city. When completed, these improvements will significantly enhance coastal recreation and lead to a better overall regional experience for visitors and residents alike.



Koey Ma

Public Education:

*Cultivating Awareness,
Inspiring Stewardship*

As always, the Commission engaged the public in coastal protection and stewardship through a variety of programs and activities in 2018. Cleanup programs continued to be popular. The 34th annual Coastal Cleanup Day in September attracted 71,765 volunteers who collected over 800,000 pounds of debris. Far from just a coastal event, the event took place in 55 counties at more than 1,000 cleanup locations, both on shorelines and in the water using kayaks, canoes, and dinghies. Tens of thousands more Californians participated in the year-round Adopt-A-Beach Program and more than 5,000 students participated in the Schoolyard Cleanup Program, which links community and watershed health to ocean health through classroom and cleanup activities.

The Commission awarded \$709,000 in [Whale Tail® grants](#) to schools and non-profit organizations for educational activities like beach field trips, habitat restoration projects, watershed clean ups, kayak trips, and marine science experiences, with an emphasis on reaching underserved communities. The Commission worked with Youth Outside to provide training in cultural relevancy, equity, and inclusion for Whale Tail® grantees.

Rigler Creative produced the final season of a [video series](#) exploring the California Coastal Trail from San Diego to Del Norte County. The project was supported by Whale Tail® License Plate revenues, the State Coastal Conservancy, International Documentary Association, and KCET-TV.

The Commission provided educators with new and existing curricula relating to topics including beach access and environmental policy, the properties of plastic, and climate change. Staff presented seven teacher workshops to support the use of Commission programs and resources.

Drivers purchased 5,400 [Whale Tail® License Plates](#), and revenue from sales and renewals for the year was \$5.3 million. Of this total, \$1.3 million went to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account, which funds the Commission's Public Education Programs, and \$4 million went to the Environmental License Plate Fund, which funds a range of environmental conservation projects. Altogether, from FY 1997/98 through December 2018, [Whale Tail® License Plates](#) sales and renewal fees (plus miscellaneous other small fees) have contributed \$29.4 million to the CBCEA and \$73.9 million to the ELPF. To promote plate sales, Commission staff worked with Radley Studios to create an [animated public service announcement](#) evoking the magic of California's coast.



5,400 Whale Tail License Plates sold in 2018

The [Protect Our Coast and Ocean fund](#) received \$361,793 in donations from 26,404 individuals in 2018, who “checked the coast” on their state tax forms. These donations support marine education and stewardship through Whale Tail® Grants.

Visit www.coast4u.org for information on how to get involved, to view winning coastal art and photography, and to learn about the Whale Tail® License Plate, the Protect Our Coast and Ocean fund tax checkoff, and other ways to support the Commission's public education work. An extended summary of the Commission's 2018 education activities can be found [here](#).



Jessica Qiu (8th grade) coastal art contest submission.

Improving Housing & Overnight Opportunities

In 2017 the Commission provided detailed guidance to local governments on how to comply with new laws governing the approval of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). To avoid conflicts, the Commission strongly recommended that local governments amend their LCPs to reflect the new requirements in a manner that also protects coastal resources. That guidance paid off, and in 2018 the Commission approved numerous LCP amendment that will make it easier for property owners to construct (ADUs) on lots with single family residences.



In southern California, development plans have been amended to streamline the construction of more affordable ADUs in notoriously expensive areas such as Newport Beach, Del Mar, Carlsbad, Encinitas, and San Diego, as well as comparably more affordable areas such as Oceanside, Long Beach and Ventura County. The County also worked closely with the Commission to craft a short-term rental ordinance that protects existing housing stock while still allowing for reasonable vacation stays.

The Commission has also overseen some recent expansion to the pool of moderate and low-cost overnight accommodations in the coastal zone. For example, in August the Commission approved an LCP amendment by the City of Chula Vista that expanded the amount of land available for moderate-cost accommodations in their Bayfront Specific Plan. At the same hearing a permit on appeal to the Commission was approved for a new hotel in Dana Point that incorporates 52 low-cost hostel beds, realizing a 15-year goal of the City's Headlands Development and Conservation Plan to fund and construct low cost accommodations in that plan area.

Thanks to a MOU between the Commission and State Parks finalized in 2018 for the transfer and expenditure of lower-cost overnight accommodation in-lieu fees, we hope to look forward to more such projects in the future. The MOU will allow for tens of thousands of dollars in Coastal Commission mitigation fees to be put to use providing new opportunities for lower-cost overnight stays in California coastal parks. Finding suitable projects for these funds has been a priority for the Commission, and we look forward to supporting a variety of creative, new proposals.

“The MOU will allow for tens of thousands of dollars in Coastal Commission mitigation fees to be put to use providing new opportunities for lower-cost overnight stays in California coastal parks.”



Teja Panchagnula

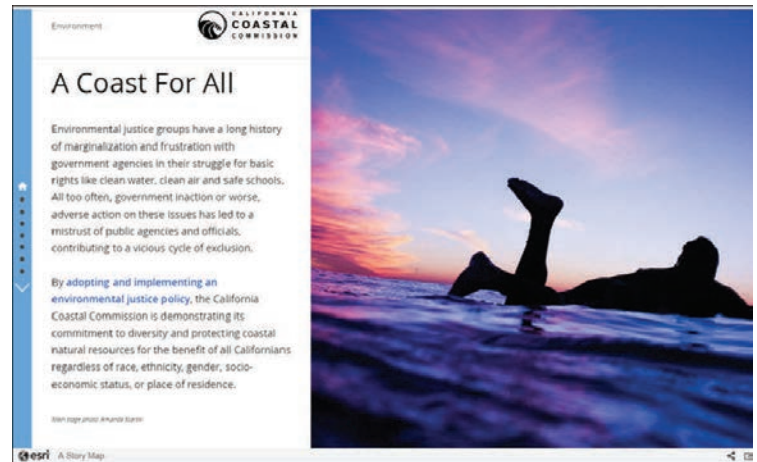
Lines in the Cyber-Sand:

*Mapping goes Digital
with Web GIS*

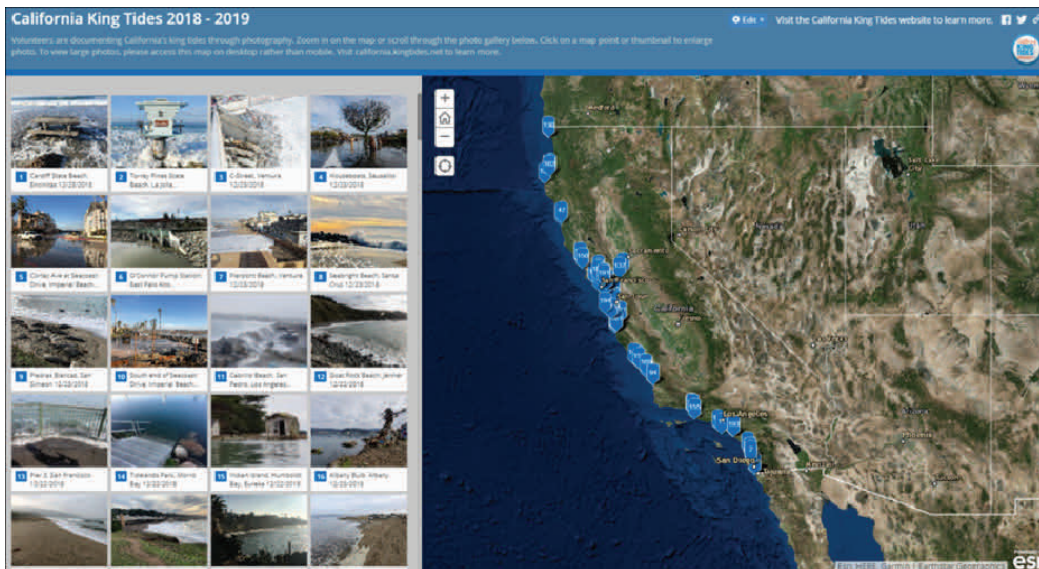
Over the past year, the Commission's Mapping/GIS Unit has implemented new online mapping technologies to help empower staff to communicate complex information to the public. ArcGIS Online is a cloud-based mapping and analysis platform that provides access to tools, maps, base map data, and other online content to create and share custom maps and applications. This platform has increased collaboration among internal teams as well as our external partners, enhanced data sharing and management, and has enabled the agency to better inform the public in a powerful and meaningful way.

In October 2018, the Environmental Justice team utilized the power of Story Maps and published the [Environmental Justice Policy Story Map](#) to increase public engagement in the Commission's effort to create an Environmental Justice Policy as an initial step toward integrating environmental justice issues into the Commission's planning and decision making processes. To date, the Story Map has received over 5,000 views.

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The Public Education department also worked with the Mapping Unit to create the [California King Tides Project Story Map](#) which presents a geographic view of citizen science data of extreme high tides in an interactive and engaging way. So far, the California King Tides Project has received over 650 photo submissions from the public showcasing these seasonal high tides in their communities.



The King Tides Project has received over 650 photo submissions from the public.

The Commission's Mapping Unit teamed up with the State Coastal Conservancy to "Map the Gaps" in the California Coastal Trail. This project will help to focus future efforts on creative solutions to finally complete the vision of a continuous trail system from the Oregon border to the Mexican border. The GIS/Mapping Unit completed the first five counties in 2018, and a final draft should be available for public review in 2019.

Looking to the future, the Mapping Unit is dedicated utilizing all the latest developments in GIS technology to support the work of the Commission, as well as our federal, state, and local partners, and the general public.

Interagency Collaboration

It takes a village to protect the coast. The Commission is pleased to partner with numerous federal, state, local and regional entities with parallel missions and an interest in sharing expertise and resources. The most formal of these partnerships are the agreements with CalTrans and Office of Spill Response, both of which fund full-time Commission staff to address specific and planning and permitting issues relating to our shared obligations.



Vincent Darmohusodo

But the Commission has also embraced numerous other opportunities to enhance inter-agency coordination. For instance, in addition to the monthly Executive Coordination Call with State Parks, the Commission executed a MOU with the State Coastal Conservancy in August that spells out the process for the SCC to accept Commission in-lieu fees for all type of permit conditions. This follows on the heels of the MOU we finalized with State Parks in December of 2017, to streamline the use of in-lieu fees for overnight accommodations. Collaborative efforts like these improve efficiency through early coordination and regular communication. In 2018 the Coastal Commission staff also continued their participated in the following task forces and working groups:

- Sea Level Rise Leadership Team
- Tsunami Policy Working Group
- Interagency Oil & Gas Platform Decommissioning Working Group
- California Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force
- Statewide Advisory Committee on Cooling Water Intake Structures
- Diablo Canyon Independent Peer Review Panel
- CalTrans Advanced Mitigation Team
- CalTrans Integrated Planning Team
- USC Sea Grant Advisory Board
- Resource Agency Sea Grant Advisory Panel
- Senior Technical Advisory Committee for BCDC
- Joint Strategic Advisory Committee for Ca Coastal Ocean Observing System
- Southern California Dredged Material Management Team
- Contaminated Sediments Task Force
- California Coastal Sediment Management Working Group
- Southern Monterey Bay Opportunistic Beach Nourishment Program TAC
- Santa Monica Mountains Enforcement Task Force
- Mendocino County Environmental Crimes Task Force
- Del Norte Environmental Crimes Task Force
- Humboldt County Environmental Crimes Task Force
- Humboldt County Code Compliance Working Group
- Integrated Watershed Restoration Program TAC
- Southern California Wetlands Recovery Group
- Wetlands Recovery Project Wetlands Managers Group
- California Wetlands Monitoring Group
- Interagency Review Teams for wetland mitigation banking
- Ormond Beach Restoration Committee
- Goleta Slough Management Committee
- Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council
- Surfers Beach Technical Advisory Group
- Fish Passage Advisory Councils for Northern California, Bay Area, Central Coast, and Southern Steelhead
- Beach Ecology Coalition
- ODSVRA Technical Review Team
- ODSVRA TRT Scientific Subcommittee
- Statewide Marine Protected Area Leadership Team
- Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Group
- Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council
- US EPA's Regional Response Team Region 9 Applied Response Technology Workgroup.
- Ports of San Diego, Long Beach, LA, Hueneme, SF and Humboldt Harbor Safety Committees



Teja Panchagnula

Federal Actions

The Commission successfully completed its 10-year Federal evaluation by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management as required under Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act. The evaluation covered a 10-year period (2008-2018). Under the evaluation, NOAA examined the operation and management of the Coastal Commission, the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), assessed their accomplishments and needs, and conducted a site visit to California to meet with agency staff, stakeholders and the public.

The 2018 federal evaluation required a significant investment of Commission staff time. Preliminary recommendations were provided by NOAA in 2018, and the final report, including recommendations for all three agencies, is forthcoming in 2019. The recommendations will be important for prioritizing areas to strengthen the coastal program and help the Commission build broader support for important initiatives.

Riparian habitat in Malibu Creek State Park will benefit from the Commission's concurrence with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Consistency Determination for the Malibu Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project in March. In addition, eight aquatic habitat barriers on Cold and Las Virgenes creeks, upstream tributaries to Malibu Creek, will be modified. The central feature of the project is the removal of the Rindge Dam and spillway on Malibu Creek, three miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean, and the concurrent removal of an estimated 780,000 cubic yards of sediment currently impounded behind the dam. Over a three-year period, the project will restore a more natural sediment transport regime in Malibu Creek and deposit approximately 278,000 cubic yards of clean sandy sediment in the nearshore zone downcoast of Malibu Pier. Sand will be placed in water depths allowing it to eventually move shoreward and downcoast. The Corps estimates that if the project is authorized and funded by Congress, project construction would commence in 2025 and last approximately eight years.

The Commission also concurred with the Navy's Consistency Determination for the relocation of the mission-critical Seal Beach Navy Weapons Station Seal Beach ammunition pier. The project involved extensive in-water construction, rerouting of civilian boating transit lanes to Huntington Harbor to reduce public safety conflicts and help improve public boating access. Although the project raised numerous Coastal Act policy concerns, through negotiated project changes and use of the "coastal dependent industrial override" policy (Section 30260) the Commission was able to determine the project consistent with the Coastal Act.

But the Commission could not support another federal proposal that would result in significant, avoidable harm to marine mammals. In June, the Commission [objected](#) to the Navy's consistency determination for 5-Year Military Readiness Training and Testing Program Activities in southern California. The program involves numerous training and testing activities, primarily within existing offshore Navy range complexes and ocean operating areas, as well as at Navy piers, ports, and shipyards.

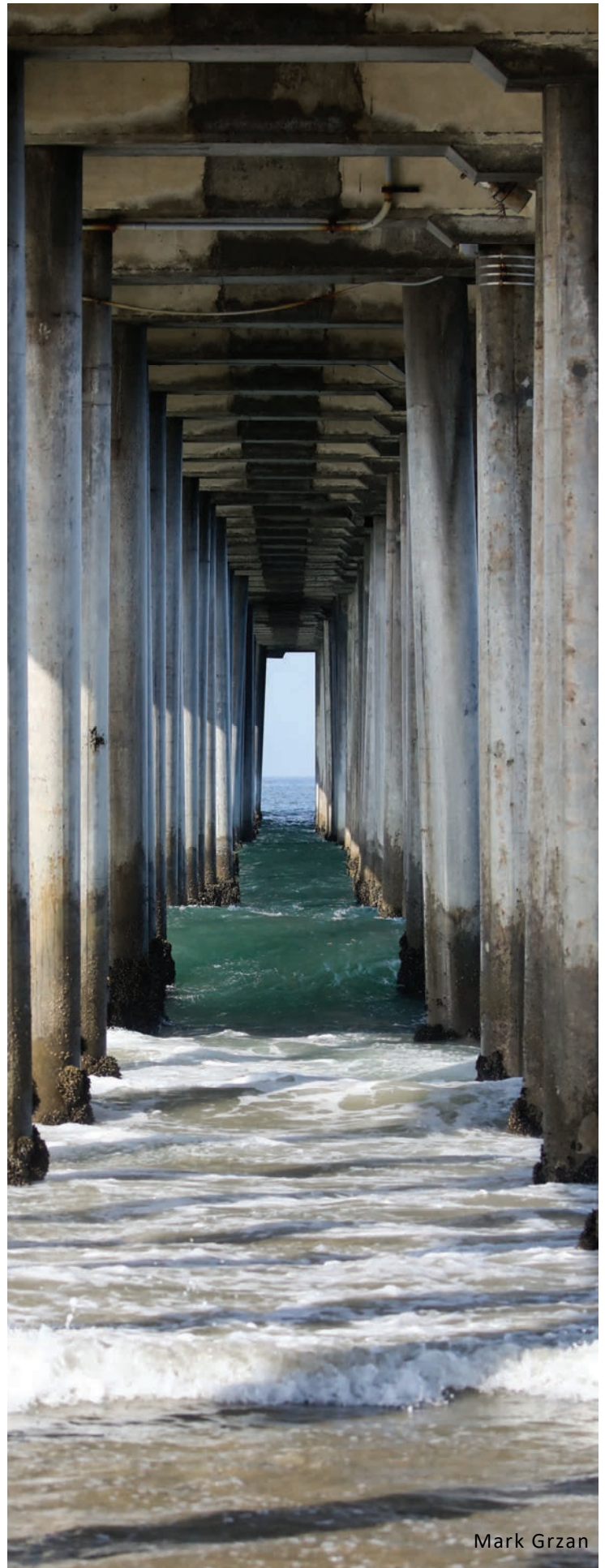
Based on the Navy's modeled estimates under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the proposed activities could result in the behavioral harassment of approximately 2.37 million marine mammals/year, and injury or potential injury of 576 marine mammals per year. The Commission found that the Navy's measures were not adequate to protect marine mammals in a manner consistent with Section 30230 of the Coastal Act.

All of the Commission's actions and related reports may be viewed at the Commission's [website](#). A video archive of each entire meeting is also available at the [Cal-Span](#) website.

“The recommendations will be important for prioritizing areas to strengthen the coastal program and help the Commission build broader support for important initiatives.”

Looking Ahead to 2019 and Beyond

On January 7, 2019, Gavin Newsom was sworn in as the state's 40th Governor. He is rapidly assembling a dynamic and capable cabinet who will implement his ambitious agenda. The Commission looks forward to working with Governor Newsom and his team to advance the Coastal Act's goals of coastal protection, public access, and sensible planning.



Mark Grzan

Office Moves Ahead

The Commission has two major office moves to complete in 2019. Both the South Coast Office in Long Beach and the San Francisco Headquarters/North Central District Office will be relocating to new locations because leases in the current locations were terminated by the building owners. These moves require a significant effort on the part of all affected staff, and the Commission is putting plans in place to minimize disruption for the public. There will be some impact on staff production and some days of required office closure.

Strategic Plan Update

The five year Strategic Plan Update is already underway, and slated for public review and adoption in 2019. The Strategic Plan outlines the goals and actions necessary to realize a clear vision and direction for the agency through 2024, and provide a publically available description of how those goals are set and met. The updated plan will include a new section relating to the Commission's environmental justice policy and the racial equity action plan currently under development with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).

Planning for Sea Level Rise and Climate Change

Climate-driven sea level rise threatens the state's 44 billion dollar coastal economy and nearly 400,000 residents who currently live within 6 feet of sea level. Within 50 – 100 years much of the state's sandy beaches will disappear, transforming California's very identity. Critical infrastructure such as highways, railroads, waste water treatment plants, and other utilities are already at risk.

To help Californians better understand of the scope of the threat, the Commission is partnering with the Ocean Protection Council, the State Lands Commission, State Parks, the State Coastal Conservancy and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission to coordinate public outreach efforts. Through these efforts we will be developing better methods to describe and talk about the nature of this existential but very real problem.

The Commission will continue to provide technical assistance as well as local planning grants to jurisdictions that are grappling with how to develop rational planning policies around this issue. One tool will be the Residential Adaptation Guidelines to assist local governments in developing sea level rise adaptation policies and ordinances in their local coastal programs, which the Commission will be adopting in 2019. In addition, the Commission in partnership with the League of Cities and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) is planning a local government workshop tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2019, focusing on sea level rise adaptation & short-term rentals.

Public Access Program

Providing and protecting public access to the beach and recreational areas in the coastal zone for all people, particularly lower-income communities of color, continues to be a core mission for the Commission. In 2019, the Commission will be embarking on an exciting opportunity to finally open some degree of public access at Hollister Ranch in Santa Barbara County. Working with the State Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, the State Lands Commission, the County of Santa Barbara, the Hollister Ranch Owners Association and the public, the Commission will be undertaking the update of an access program adopted nearly 40 years ago, but never implemented, despite a long-standing legal mandate to do so.

Enforcement Program

The administrative penalty provision for access violations has been a great help in resolving access cases, but the enforcement program continues to face staffing challenges, with over 2,500 open, unresolved violation cases of all types, and more coming in each month. With the current level of staff resources, prioritizing access means delays for other types of violations, such as those involving wetlands and environmentally sensitive habitat. The Commission also faces a longstanding and critical gap in our effectiveness: the lack of a permit condition compliance program. Unlike almost every other regulatory agency, the Commission does not have dedicated staff charged with monitoring and following up on the permits issued by the Commission. This has long been identified by NOAA as a programmatic short coming. As a result, the Commission must largely rely on anecdotal information and observations by the public to identify permit violations. Obtaining funding for this function, and expanded administrative penalty authority are high priorities for the Commission to strengthen the enforcement program.

Energy, Ocean Resources and Federal Consistency Division

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management ("BOEM") will soon release a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a 2019-2024 Proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Last year's Draft Proposed Program – the first step in developing a 5-year leasing program — recommends that federal waters offshore Northern, Central and Southern California be leased for oil and gas development. The Draft Proposed Program proposes the first lease sale in California to be held in 2020 in BOEM's Southern California Planning Area. Any lease sale will require federal consistency review.

BOEM is also pursuing leasing in federal waters for offshore wind development. In October, BOEM issued a Call for Information and Nominations requesting information and expressions of interest for three offshore Call Areas. The Call closed at the end of January, and staff anticipates BOEM will submit a federal consistency determination on potential lease areas later this year.

Staff anticipates bringing up to five or six desalination proposals to the Commission in 2019 (including Cal-Am in Monterey, Poseidon in Huntington Beach, expansion of the existing facility on Catalina Island, upgrades to the existing Poseidon facility in Carlsbad, a desalination plant in Cambria (on appeal) and possibly the South Coast Water District proposal at Doheny Beach, Orange County). Staff also anticipates bringing up to eight aquaculture projects to hearing in 2019, including a large-scale operation proposed by Ventura Shellfish Enterprise and a large expansion of Catalina Sea Ranch.

Other significant project proposals to go before the Commission this year include: the first phase of decommissioning the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS), remediation of the SONGS mitigation reef and wetland, the Palos Verdes Reef Restoration Project, the Poseidon Carlsbad Wetlands Mitigation Project, 3-5 golf courses and a Snowy Plover/Public Access Management Plan on Vandenberg Air Force Base, a Point Reyes National Seashore beef and dairy Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan, construction of a hotel on Trust Lands of the Trinidad Rancheria, and the placement of 9 parcels into Trust in Trinidad Harbor area.

Staff Retirements and Staff Retention

Of the Commission's approximately 168 staff members, 58 are currently eligible for retirement. From July 1, 2013, through the end of December, 2018, the Commission has seen 25 experienced staff members retire and expecting at least two more in early 2019 and likely and there will be added retirements in December 2019. We expect another 30-40 over the next 1-5 years. In addition to losing this valuable institutional memory, we are also losing talented staff to local governments, other public agencies and private companies because of the state's comparatively low wages. The rate of turnover has had serious impacts on the staff's ability to meet workload demands and maintain morale. Commission management is exploring every avenue to increase salaries, retain staff and mentor staff for future management positions.

In conclusion, prioritizing and staffing the core planning and regulatory functions of the Commission in combination with the many other initiatives and projects we are currently working on will continue to be a significant challenge for the foreseeable future, given the agency's limited staff resources. The unfortunate reality is that some important work and initiatives will be delayed because the Commission simply does not have the staff capacity to handle the substantial and growing workload. This is a perennial problem. However, the commission staff is a group of incredibly dedicated, mission-driven public servants who will continue to provide excellent high level work products in our ongoing pursuit to protect our state's precious coastal resources.

“The unfortunate reality is that some important work and initiatives will be delayed because the Commission simply does not have the staff capacity to handle the substantial and growing workload.”

